GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF ALABAMA

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The Honorable Raul Grijalva, Chairman
House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Rob Bishop, Ranking Member
House Natural Resources Committee
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Representatives Grijalva and Bishop:

This letter is written in support of programs for geologic mapping, geologic hazards, and the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) National Geological and Geophysical Data Preservation Program (NGGDPP).

Geologic maps produced by the Geological Survey of Alabama (GSA) have been critically important in identifying geologic resources such as fuel and non-fuel mineral deposits, in locating geologic hazards, and in quantifying areas of aquifer recharge zones. The USGS NGGDPP program has provided GSA funding for several years and this has allowed GSA to preserve (via digitization) older geologic maps, as well as compile essential data for Statewide collections of paleontological, mineral, and core specimens and information. These data were shared in a nationally-accessible, online catalog, encouraging geologic resource exploration by the public, researchers, and other government agencies. These data are also referenced by GSA staff for in-house projects related to mineral documentation, geologic mapping, and geologic hazards.

Through the USGS STATEMAP program, GSA is able to generate new detailed geologic maps documenting geologic resources and hazards. Geologic hazards are a continuous threat to the health and safety of Alabamians. Faults related to earthquakes, steep slopes related to landslides, naturally radioactive rocks related to carcinogenic gases, and cavernous rocks related to sinkholes and ground collapse are present around the State and deserve the attention of study and mapping. Information gained from these mapping and research studies is shared with the public and incorporated into the State

Hazard Mitigation Plans required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to support decision making in development and planning.

Out of all geologic hazards in Alabama, sinkholes are the most common and costly, with multiple reported incidents impacting roads, bridges, businesses, and homes each year. As of 2019, there is no Statewide system of tracking sinkholes, but a mapping effort using the USGS 3D Elevation Program's (3DEP) LiDAR (new high resolution elevation data), in conjunction with USGS STATEMAP-produced geologic maps, is allowing new detailed assessments of geologic hazards, including karst risk zones.

Federal programs supporting geologic mapping and hazards assessments (STATEMAP and 3DEP) and documentation of geologic resources (NGGDPP) are important to Alabama and its development and safety. We greatly appreciate your continued support of these programs and funding opportunities.

Sincerely,

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State Geologist and
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